Preparatory Committee for the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

23 April 2004

Original: English

Third session
New York, 26 April-7 May 2004

Implementation of article VI of the NPT and paragraph 4 (c) of the 1995 decision on principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament

Report submitted by Australia

The NPT remains essential to international efforts to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, facilitate access to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and advance nuclear disarmament. The current intense international concern about weapons of mass destruction proliferation, including potentially to non-state groups, has added to the importance of the NPT-based nuclear non-proliferation regime. Universality remains a key objective. Australia calls upon the three countries yet to join - India, Pakistan and Israel - to accede to the Treaty as non-nuclear weapon states.

As a non-nuclear weapon state, Australia's main contribution to nuclear disarmament is working for progress on the reinforcing steps essential to create an environment favourable to the elimination of nuclear weapons.

Australia believes that the Article VI goal of nuclear disarmament can only be achieved through a series of balanced, incremental and reinforcing steps – including nuclear warhead reductions, entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), negotiation of a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT), further progress on nuclear weapon-free zones, and a strong and effective nuclear non-proliferation regime.

The Treaty of Moscow which entered into force on June 1 2003 is a notable further step towards nuclear disarmament. The significance of the Treaty of Moscow lies not just in its quantitative reductions but also in its ushering in of a more cooperative US-Russia arms control relationship. Australia hopes both countries will take advantage of the opportunities provided by this approach to pursue progressive reductions to strategic and non-strategic nuclear weapons in both deployed and reserve holdings. Australia looks forward to full implementation of the Treaty of Moscow.

At UNGA 58 Australia was an original co-sponsor of the nuclear disarmament resolution "A path to the total elimination of nuclear weapons", which emphasises the central importance of following the

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practical steps agreed in the final document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference for the systematic and progressive implementation of Article VI commitments.

Australia strongly supports the CTBT and continues to make representations to countries yet to sign or ratify, especially Annex Two countries and those in the Asia Pacific region, urging their early signature and/or ratification of the Treaty. Australia warmly welcomed the affirmation at the Third CTBT Article XIV Conference in Vienna in September 2003 of the international community's strong commitment to the Treaty. Australia with Mexico and New Zealand formed the core group which put forward the resolution on the CTBT adopted at UNGA 58. Australia is an active participant in development of the CTBT International Monitoring System (IMS) and welcomes the continued progress being made on the IMS. Australia will host the third highest number of IMS stations (after the United States and Russia) and currently has the highest number of CTBT monitoring stations certified as meeting CTBT requirements.

The Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) remains a priority for Australia. Australia is continuing to press for a start to FMCT negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. Australia is also active in promoting examination of issues that will arise in these negotiations, including a verification approach. Pending resolution of the CD deadlock and a start to FMCT negotiations, Australia strongly supports the informal work on FMCT issues being conducted in Geneva and elsewhere, and encourages wide participation in this process.

Effective non-proliferation is essential for a climate conducive to nuclear disarmament. Recent events have highlighted a clear and urgent need to strengthen the NPT's compliance and verification mechanisms.

IAEA safeguards are not static and have undergone considerable evolution since the NPT entered into force (1970). The Additional Protocol and the development of strengthened and integrated safeguards are the most recent manifestation of this. Australia played a prominent role in negotiation of the Additional Protocol and was the first country to ratify such a Protocol.

Australia maintains an active program to encourage the conclusion of further Additional Protocols. Australia and many others are of the firm view that the Additional Protocol together with a comprehensive safeguards agreement is the current verification standard pursuant to Article III.1 of the Treaty. Australia supports the 2005 Review Conference taking a decision that the Additional Protocol is mandatory under Article III of the Treaty. Australia considers that integrated IAEA safeguards are essential to the effective and cost effective implementation of strengthened safeguards.

The risk of NPT parties misusing the Treaty's peaceful nuclear energy provisions in order to acquire the technical basis for a rapid breakout to nuclear weapons is a serious matter for the international community. Australia supports development of an international dialogue on limiting the spread of sensitive technology.

Australia will be working for a fair and balanced treatment of all NPT issues in the 2005 review cycle. Australia encourages all NPT parties to bring to the review process a spirit of constructive cooperation consistent with our shared interests in maintaining and strengthening this vital Treaty.

Outreach and Regional Assistance

Australia is stepping up its regional outreach efforts. As part of these efforts, Australia is conducting outreach to regional countries on agreements such as the CTBT and the Additional Protocol. Australia is also working with regional countries on practically-based outreach in key areas such as export controls, nuclear security, and safeguards training.